This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

LB1025
.L55

LB1025 .L55
Modes of instruction in common scho
Gutman Library
APD4878
3 2044 028 961 969

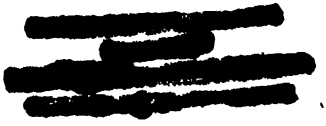
Leonard - Instruction in common scho
1844.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

LIBRARY OF THE

GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

MODES OF INSTRUCTION



COMMON SCHOOLS;

ADAPTED PARTICULARLY TO

SUMMER SCHOOLS.

[FROM THE CONNECTICUT COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.]

WITH

PREFATORY REMARKS,

BY L. W. LEONARD.

KEENE:
GEORGE TILDEN.
1844.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
MONROE C. GUTMAN LIBRARY

LR1025
.L55

[redacted]

NOV. 7, 1923

NOV. 7, 1923

PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE suggestions made in this pamphlet, respecting modes of instruction, were first published in the Connecticut Common School Journal. They were afterwards inserted in the Common School Journal, edited by the Hon. Horace Mann, who introduced them with the following commendation: "Let no one be deterred from reading this article on account of its length. We could not spare a sentence without losing an excellent suggestion. The recommendation respecting the use of slates, should be every where followed,—furnishing *long* pencils to the scholars instead of "*short*" ones, because short pencils lay the foundation of bad habits in holding a pen. But especially to every teacher of a summer school, we say, read the article and practice upon its advice, and a "*five months*'" school will do as much as has usually been accomplished, in the old way, in *fifty*."

Few of our summer schools, in the country, are kept for a longer term than three months, and many not more than two months. But the modes of instruction here recommended may be successfully put in practice in the shortest school—no matter whether it continue five weeks or five months, consist of ten scholars or a hundred, more will be accomplished in a given time,—not *fifty* times as much perhaps,—but *far more*, than by pursuing the old routine.

Nothing is said about the use of the black-board, in the following pages. Most of our school-houses, at the present day, are furnished with one; but it is too often placed so high that young children cannot reach it. Others should be immediately provided and placed where all the little ones can have access to them. The change from the slate and pencil to the black-board affords a pleasing variety in the exercises, and prolongs the interest which young children must have in order to be profited by their presence in the school-room.

The exercise of singing is not mentioned, but it has already been introduced into some of our schools, and the effect has been such that we are persuaded no long time will elapse before its introduction becomes general.

It will be perceived that some apparatus is necessary for conducting a school on the plan which the following article recommends. Parents should aid the teacher in this respect, furnishing the necessary slates and pencils, letter-blocks, reading-frames, pictures, reading-cards, and whatever the teacher may find occasion to use.

Our school-houses, it is true, are not all so constructed as to afford the best facilities for the exercises proposed; but in the worst house that can be found, these exercises will be far better than the old ones.

Though especially adapted to summer schools, yet teachers of winter schools will find the suggestions valuable, for very few schools, in the country, have not some young pupils in them in the winter. Let teachers, both male and female, study this article till its details become perfectly familiar, and they will see that there is a better way than the old one, and they will be anxious to *try* the better way. But the parents of a district must second the efforts of the teacher. They must not say, in presence of their children, "We never heard of such things—we do not like them—we prefer the old way." Such a course

will spoil the whole. Parents must take hold with the teacher, and encourage their children to persevere in the new modes. Competent teachers, duly sustained, will soon overcome the first difficulties; and, when this is done, there will be little danger of any one's recommending a return to the old methods. We have known teachers to fail, when they attempted new modes of instruction, because they "proceeded too rapidly and made too many innovations at a time." The article which follows, gives a caution on this point, to which teachers should pay due heed. They must wisely husband their expedients, inventions and resources. If they expend their whole stock in a day or a week, their attempt will be a failure and the work of improvement receive a check, from which it will take a long time to recover.

This article is not republished because we suppose it will be all new to the teachers of this county. Many teachers, it is probable, have put these suggestions in practice. We have been in schools where they were followed in part, and they were decidedly superior to any others we ever saw. All our schools may be made better in the same way.

In conclusion, we cannot forbear to recommend to every teacher of common schools the careful reading of Mr Mann's seventh annual Report to the Massachusetts Board of Education. It is filled with the most important practical matter; and no teacher, whose heart is in the work, can read it without interest and profit. Every district should purchase a copy for the use of the teacher, parents and others who may be disposed to read it.

MODES OF INSTRUCTION

IN

COMMON SCHOOLS.

THE following thoughts and suggestions, the result of many years' teaching, in every form of Common Schools, from those of central, populous villages, to those of the more remote parts of country towns, are particularly designed for the female teachers of our Summer Schools. They may afford hints, however, to teachers of the elementary branches, of every form and grade of school, from the infant school to the university. Parents, moreover, who have any thing to do with the *instruction* of their children,—and those who have not, ought to have,—may possibly derive occasional hints, which may be useful to them, in the discharge of the duties of the family school.

Suppose a female teacher thrown, at once, without much experience, among *fifty*, *sixty*, or *eighty*, pupils, of all sorts of character, and almost every degree of mental development. She has taken the school, it may be, for five months. She receives, or is to receive, a dollar a week and her board; not more, it is admitted, than half as much as she can earn. Nevertheless, it is as much as the district has been accustomed to give; it is as much as she can obtain any where, in the vicinity. Besides, she has a higher object in view, in teaching, than merely to gain a livelihood. She is moved to be useful. She has compassion on the ignorant and the vicious, and sees the bearing which the Common Schools now have, upon their condition, and that which good Common Schools might have. In a word, she is impelled by the love of God and of man, no less than by motives which concern self, to engage in this highly responsible employment.

How shall she accomplish, during the short period of five months, the greatest amount of good to the pupils of her charge? She is willing, indeed, to please the parents, and secure their entire approbation: and she is not without a desire to obtain the reputation of being an accomplished teacher. Still the great question is, how can she do the most good?

Let her, in the outset, manifest to her pupils, her deep interest in their welfare; her love for them, and her desire for their improvement and happiness, as well as her ardent love for her profession. This is not to be done in wordy pretensions, merely, nor even by external manifestations of affection and fondness; but by showing them that she *values* them. The manifestations of genuine love are more readily and effectually made, and less liable to be mistaken, when they consist in making provision for the comfort, cheerfulness, health, and happiness, of the children committed to her charge. She, who truly loves her pupils, rejoices with them when they rejoice; and weeps with them, or is disposed to do so, when they weep. She is glad to see them enter the school-room, in the morning, and is accustomed to show forth her gladness, even if it should not find its way into words. She rejoices to see them comfortably warmed and seated, and happy in their seats and studies. Indeed, all the day long, her sympathies vibrate, as it were, with their feelings; she has all the solicitude of a tender parent, and her pupils know it. Such conduct will win their confidence,—ay, and their love, too, if any thing will.

"Love, and love only, is the loan for love."

One proof, that a teacher loves her pupils, (and which, by the way, will be likely to make them love her) will be found in the disposition to give them employment. Children must have something to do, unless we would make dolts of them. We have seen a few children, from three to seven years of age, who had been forced to the habit of sitting, like stocks and stones, in the school-room, from one to two hours, at a time. But such submission to a vile tyranny is not common. If we attempt to keep them so unreasonably quiet, or rather, so exceedingly stupid, they usually rebel; they are found in some sort of motion or other, and, it must be confessed, quite too often playing

tricks. But who can blame them for it? Who of us, adults, would submit to such tyranny over our movements. Let the teacher, therefore, make it a first principle to find her pupils pretty full employment.

Children should indeed be taught to sit still, a reasonable length of time. It is a kind of discipline, which is believed to be as useful as any thing else. Yet, there is no reason why a child should be taught to sit still long enough to hear a speech of ten hours, from a modern Congressional orator. Neither should he be taught to sit still, two hours, or even one hour, on a hard bench, in a school-room. Children must have employment; the smallest of them, as well as the largest.

By employment, however, I mean a great variety of things, as well as mere school exercises. Very small pupils may be employed, even in standing up. A young female teacher, who is busily employed, for example, in instructing one of her more advanced classes, perceives half a dozen of her smaller pupils getting uneasy on their seats, and tying or untying their own shoes, or those of their neighbors. Will she not better manifest her own love, as well as be much more likely to secure theirs, if, instead of a reprimand or a frown, she permits them to stand up, a few moments? They are usually pleased with it; and it will generally succeed in turning off their attention from what is called mischief. Care must be taken, of course, not to have them stand too long; for they soon get tired of standing, and then it is no longer a reward, but a punishment. Five minutes is usually a long time, to the young pupil; and, however short it may seem to us, it is frequently as long as will be pleasant to them,—sometimes, even longer. It may be well, if there is a clock in the room, as there ought to be, to name a time,—two, three, four, five, or six, minutes, according to circumstances,—and let them see, by the clock, if they understand it, that you are not governed by caprice, in your decision about the expiration of the time; for, otherwise, you will or may be sometimes suspected of deceiving them, and extending your five minutes to eight or ten.

When a teacher cannot oversee the little pupils, while they stand, another scholar may be delegated, to act in her stead, at least for a time. Ingenious teachers, however, soon learn to divide their attention so far, as to oversee

several such little classes, while standing, without any interference with their more serious and arduous duties. For, if rightly managed, they will esteem it a great favor to stand; and, instead of requiring attention, would seem to be quite conscientious, and delight in standing upright, and conducting with propriety.

The same general principles may be applied to other movements of young children, in the school-room, for a similar purpose; as marching, clapping hands, &c. But it is not sufficient, to exercise young children in the school-room; they should be permitted to go out into the open air, at least once an hour, especially in Summer.* Here, in particular, the care of a monitor is required, not only to prevent their doing any thing wrong, or staying beyond the appointed time, but also to keep them from receiving injury to body or mind, by accident, or from the contagion of bad example. Let it not be forgotten, moreover, that no discipline could be more useful to a monitor herself, if she is judiciously selected and happily adapted to her class, than the oversight of her companions. The nearer the monitor is to their own age, provided she is old enough to exercise properly the authority delegated to her, the better will it be, for both the parties.

There is no great difficulty in employing young pupils in such a way, as to keep them out of mischief, would we only try seriously, to use our inventive powers. And yet, how to manage very small pupils is often one of the most serious troubles which the teachers of our large central schools, especially in the Summer, are called to encounter. Many a teacher would tell you, that, were it not for her very small scholars, she could accomplish something; but that the management of the small pupils consumes almost all her time. And there is very little doubt, that a teacher will usually find it much easier to instruct forty pupils, who are all over six years of age, than twenty, of whom ten are from three to five.

Now, if this difficulty of managing very young pupils,—those, we mean, who are from three to six,—can be overcome; if there are methods of managing them with far

* In bad weather, a playroom, or, at least, a playground covered with an awning, is exceedingly desirable. No parent would grudge the expense of it, if he had but the most distant conceptions of its value.

greater ease and profit; then, is it not desirable that such methods should be pointed out?

Some of them have been alluded to, in the foregoing paragraphs. But there are others, which remain to be mentioned. One of the more important of these consists in the use of slates. We speak from experience, when we say that one third of the tedium, and not a little of what is called mischief, may be prevented, by the introduction of slates and pencils among little children. Our experience has, indeed, been confined to slates of a very small size,—only from four to six inches square, frame and all,—with short pieces of pencil. These were given to them, as a favor, and only when other expedients began to fail. When the school commenced, they were required to sit, awhile, without much notice, which they were usually willing to do. But, after half an hour or so, it became necessary to give them occasional opportunities of standing. After the lapse of an hour, recreation became necessary in the open air, and, when the weather was good, it was allowed; but, when the weather was very bad, marching, and other in-door exercises, were substituted. After exercise, they could sit still, again; again, their sitting could be alternated with standing; and finally, towards the close of each half day, slates were allowed. Those alone, who have used slates with such small pupils, can readily conceive of the pleasure which they derive from their use, and of the benefit, both to the teacher and the scholars.

Some will suppose, that these efforts to employ pupils will cost more time, than the usual efforts at correcting evils, after they are perpetrated. They are mistaken, however. That it takes a little time to form one's plan for employing her pupils, as well as a little more to put it in execution, and accustom the pupils to it, and especially to fit a few monitors for their duty, will not be denied. But, when once fairly set agoing, all proceeds like clock-work, and almost as quietly and harmoniously. And, when in full operation, the saving of time to the teachers is immense. Besides, it is only in the beginning of these novelties, that they cause trouble among the pupils, by exciting attention. When they once clearly perceive that their teacher is a woman of expedients; that she can, at any time, invent something new, the novelty ceases, in a great

measure, to cause interruption. It is indeed noticed, at first, but is soon forgotten.

At first, it may be well to allow pupils to follow the bent of their own inclination, in regard to the purpose to which they apply their slates, till they get a little accustomed to the use of a pencil; after which, it may be well to give them lessons. These may be various. Sometimes, a letter of the alphabet will form a good lesson; sometimes, a triangle or square; sometimes, the picture of a boy, consisting of a mere outline, or the picture of a dog, or a horse.

Little time need be consumed by the teacher, in these exercises. Suppose the lesson is the letter O, or A, or H, or W; it is sufficient for the teacher to give out the slates and pencils, which are kept in a box or drawer; and, after making the letter which she wishes them to make, on the side of a large slate, hang it up before them, or procure another scholar to hold it. When the first symptoms of fatigue with the exercise begin to appear, a new lesson should be given, or the slates should be taken away. In any event, it is by no means advisable to let them retain them till they grow indifferent about them. The greatest care should be taken, at all times, to avoid satiety.

This method of combining amusement and instruction may be prosecuted, to an indefinite extent; at least, we have never found any limits to it. We are not sure, that it may not be well to require each Abecedarian to write, for his slate lesson, the letter he is learning. Perhaps, a class of this description might begin with the small *o* or *i*, and alternately pronounce it and write it, until perfectly familiar to them. In any event, it would be desirable to have them write all their lessons, when a little more advanced.

Let neither the teacher nor the pupils be discouraged, at the rough lines and uncouth resemblances of the first efforts. All things in nature must have a beginning.

From the writing of small letters on the slate, the pupil may proceed, in time, to the larger letters; afterward, to combinations of letters, beginning with the simplest, and proceeding, by degress, to the more difficult.

We have spoken, as if the course to be pursued with a pupil, at setting out in the path of knowledge, was to begin with the study of letters. The best teachers, of late,

begin with whole words, as *hand*, *book*, &c., and, when the pupil has become somewhat familiar with the practice of reading whole words and simple combinations of words, or short sentences, he is required to analyze them, or study the letters separately. In case of beginning to read whole words, we would depart a little from the plan above suggested,—that of writing the lesson the pupil is studying; for, though reading whole words, we would still write single letters.

There is one capital exercise, however, for children, which may and should accompany the reading of whole words, as above. The teacher should procure a quantity of the words the pupil is reading, and have them in a box, ready for use. Thus, suppose the current lesson of a child consists of the two words, *hand* and *book*. In this case, he should have a considerable number of words, of those two kinds, cut from a printed book or newspaper, in large type, together with a few others, as man, horse, and cow. After a class have been reading *book* and *hand*, the teacher or monitor may lay a handful of the words we have mentioned before each pupil, on his desk,* if he have one, if not, on some book spread open, or on a board or bench, and set him to selecting the two words of his lesson, and telling which they are, as well as distinguishing one from the other. In like manner, if the letters are learned before the words, the same course may be pursued, in relation to the letters.

One admirable exercise, nearly akin to the foregoing, consists in incorporating letters into words. Thus, after a child has made some progress in reading, whether after the old plan or the new, we give him a quantity of letters, cut out as above, and allow him to combine them into words.

There is another exercise, beyond this, which may be employed at a very early age. It consists in requiring the pupils to combine written letters into words. To this end, however, the written letters ought to be very plainly written; copy slips would be preferable to any thing else. At a period still later, he might learn to combine words. Another exercise, and a most admirable one for the slate,

* It is quite convenient for every pupil in school, however small, to have a seat of his own, with a back to it, and a desk in front; and each seat and desk should be independent of, and separate from, every other.

might be that of making and combining figures. Thus, after being taught to make 1, 2, 3, &c., he might be taught how to put together 1 and 2, 1 and 3, 1 and 4, &c., and might be taught, also, their value, separately and combined.

As the child advances, and becomes able to write his lesson in spelling, and to write well and rapidly, he may amuse himself, as well as improve his mind, in perfecting his lessons still more and more. It may be questioned, whether any special exercises in writing, in the usual way, will be necessary to those who are constantly accustomed to the use of slates, from the very first. Certain it is, that, without them, such pupils never fail to write a good hand, as we have seen abundantly proved in both common schools, and institutions for the deaf and dumb.

By this method of employing children, more for the sake of employing them, than any thing else, we thus initiate them into reading, writing, spelling, &c. But we have not yet done with slate exercises. The further a child advances, and the more he uses his slate, the more will he love to use it, and the more may it be made an efficient instrument, in the way of his improvement.

It would require a volume to set forth, in detail, all the methods which might be devised, of using a slate advantageously, in the business and duties of the Common School. Not that books are to be wholly overlooked and despised; by no means. But far more may be done by pupils, between the ages of three or four and seven or eight years, with nothing but slates and pencils, than by all the books in the world, without the slates.*

Books, like slates, should be esteemed as favors, and should in no case be imposed as punishments, nor lessons, as tasks. And yet, as many teachers are apt to manage, there is not a child, in a whole school, who does not see that his lesson is imposed as a task, and the book handed to him to keep him out of mischief; or, at least, as an obstacle, to prevent his doing mischief with so much ease;

* Let us not be understood, as disposed to turn all study into mere play. Far from it. Children should be taught to study, in due time; and to study hard. The great point is, to lead them along, in such a manner, that they will love study. To this end, it is, that we would make their first studies, though not play, yet *playful;* that their future ones may be voluntary and agreeable.

a clog upon his heels, so cumbersome, that, in traversing the by-paths of roguery, he must go a little more slowly.

As things are now managed, it would be a matter of the greatest surprise, if little children, at school, did not find their lessons irksome, rather than pleasant, and their books a burden, than a source of happiness. But, let a hungering and thirsting be created for them, in the use of their slates, and then let these be given out to them, at a certain time, for a certain time,—five, ten, or twelve, minutes; and then, before they get tired of them, or begin to soil them, let them be taken away; and we should soon have far less complaint, than we now do, about dullness of apprehension, and a disrelish for study.

Think of the advantages to be derived to parents, teachers, and pupils, from substituting slates for books. In the first place, the expense of the slates and pencils is as nothing, compared with that of books. Secondly, they are better pleased with them. Thirdly, they give them more varied employment,—a point of exceeding great importance. Fourthly, they prevent the habits of soiling and injuring books, and, by consequence, of being slovenly with other things; (a child, who is slovenly in the use of books, will easily be so in the use of every thing else, unless the habit is counteracted.) Fifthly, a great deal of time is saved to the teacher, to be devoted to the discipline and instruction of the rest of the school. This, alone, is worth all the pains which such an innovation upon old usages is likely to cost. And, lastly, it prevents the formation of a thousand little habits, as those of biting the nails, picking the nose, rubbing the eyes, shrugging the shoulders, &c., &c.; habits, which, beginning as a relief, either from ennui or actual pain, gradually become, by repetition, almost invulnerable.

But there are a few more special uses of the slate, in the case of pupils who have become tolerably good readers; and, with the pencil, ready writers. We must, however, be brief, in our remarks.

One is, writing and drawing. We have already alluded to this subject, as a mere employment, and to prevent bad habits. But, after our young pupils get the use of the pencil, and begin to imitate forms, be it ever so roughly, they may not only be employed, but instructed; and that, too, with some regard to system. They may not only be

permitted to make angles and triangles, squares and circles, but also irregular ones; and they may be taught to distinguish the one from another, as well as to combine them in various ways, beginning with the simplest.

Again, in regard to circles. One circle may be made to represent the sun; another, the moon; another, the human head; another, the eye; another, a piece of money, a button, a clock-face, a watch, a ring, or a plate. Not that a circular line represents any one of these, with exactness, unless it be a ring; but because they are bounded by a circular line, which the young eye readily detects, before it detects much else; because it greatly aids in leading the child to observation. Thus, he who draws a circle, to represent the moon, or the human head, will be very aptly led to notice the objects connected with the moon and head, and may easily be induced to represent them, also.

Here, it may be asked, whether exercises of this sort will not degenerate into mere play and picture-making. They may, or they may not. There is no necessity of any such degeneracy. In the first place, the use of the slates should not be continued to long, at any one time. In the second place, they should be taken away, when they play with them; when they depart, we mean, from the intention of the lesson. This punishment, the punishment of privation, is the only one which we have ever found necessary, in such cases.

When a pupil knows, that, if he departs widely from the intention of the lesson, his slate will be taken from him, he will usually confine himself to its legitimate and appropriate use.

One word more, however, in regard to drawing circles. The pupil may be shown, that two circles, combined, form the figure 8; that one circle forms the letter O, small and large; that a circle with a small break in it, forms the greater part of the large and small C, as well as the large Q and G, and the small e; that an important portion of the small letters, b, d, p, q, s, as well as the large letters, B, D and P, R, S and U, are made up from a circle; and, finally, that the figures 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, are essential parts of circles.

The teacher, whose common sense approves of the suggestions of these paragraphs, and who wishes to prevent

the monotony, and tediousness, and disgust, so common in our schools, must, however, remember one caution, which is, "to make haste slowly." Let her procure the slates and short pieces of pencil; they cost but little. But let her not proceed too rapidly, and make too many innovations, at a time. Perhaps she need not, with these hints before her, be, like ourselves, ten or twelve years, in coming to a rational course of management; nor need we have been so long, had the light been thrown in our path, to guide us, which we are now endeavoring to hold out to others.

Proceeding cautiously, however, feeling her way, with care, the teacher will bring her pupils, at length, to such a degree of perfection, in the use of slates and pencils, that much may be done with them, in the inculcation and acqusition of almost every elementary branch which devolves on her to teach.

Much may be done at map-making, provided the pupils can be furnished with large slates; for the small slates, we have mentioned, would hardly be adapted to this purpose. The practice of drawing the windows, table, walls, and floor, already recommended, would prepare the way for it; it is indeed the commencement of it; for what is this very exercise, but map-making? It might easily be extended to drawing the outline of the school-house, the play-ground, the dwelling-house, to which the child belongs, its various rooms, the garden, the home-lot, the streets of the neighborhood; his native town, &c. When a child has proceeded so far, as to draw the outlines of a county or State, it may be well to alternate another exercise with the last, which consists in teaching him to combine dissected maps, using the other maps, with the county and town lines, as the case may be, as a guide, till he becomes a little familiar with the exercise.

After the pupils have become a little accustomed to putting words together, to form sentences, (printed words, we mean, cut from some book or paper) a most excellent preparatory exercise, by the way,—words may be given them, for this purpose, by dictation. Thus, the teacher or a monitor may dictate to them, slowly, the following list of words, requesting them to write them on their slates, and then proceed to form them into sentences;—*man, short, evil, and, life, the, is, are, trouble, days, full, no, few.*

How many sentences can be formed, which will have force and meaning in them, from these thirteen short words, we are not sure; but we recollect, readily, the following eleven. "Days are short," "The days of man are short," "The days of man are few," "The days of man are few, and full of trouble," "Life is short," "Life is full of evil," "Life is full of trouble," "Man is evil," "Man is full of trouble," "Man is evil, and full of trouble," "Trouble no man."

If a monitor find it difficult, at first, to select such words as would form a pleasing variety of sentences, a little instruction, from an experienced teacher, would remove the difficulty. One way is, for the monitor to take short and easy lessons in a reading-book, and, after noting which of them occur more frequently, and seem to be the most useful for her purpose, to give them out, accordingly.

But we come, finally, to the most important exercise of all,—one, in fact, for which all the others are a preparation, and which consists in framing a single important and interesting word, given out by the teacher, into one or more sentences. Thus, the following words are perhaps given out, to be written down on the slate;—*apple*, *gold*, *tree*, *paper*, *dog*, *lion*, *hawk*, *snow*, *wind*, *angry*, *head*, *arm*, *hand*, *foot*, *house*, *room*.

This is, indeed, a long list, much longer than would appear, at first view, either necessary or useful; but it is selected as an illustration of our meaning. Perhaps the first three of these words might be sufficient, for a single lesson. Each pupil is required to form one or more sentences, into which each of these words enter, as a component part, and to use his own judgment, in the selection and formation of his sentences.

They only, who have pursued this plan of instruction, are aware, how interesting as well as profitable it is to pupils, and how it calls into exercise all their powers and faculties. One great objection to most of the methods of instruction, which now prevail in our Common Schools, is, that they cultivate the mind but partially or unequally. But that the exercise in question has a more happy effect, will be easily seen, by the following consideration of its results.

Thus, one pupil will make the following use of the list of words referred to. "Charles gave me an *apple*."

"*Gold* is yellow." "Zaccheus climbed a *tree*." Another will write, "The *apple* is useful for food, both for men and beasts." "My father has a *gold* watch." "The elm *tree*, at the corner of the green, is beautiful." A third, especially when he understands that he may, will write some little anecdote of one or more of the words; perhaps of the word *tree*. "One of my cousins," he will say, "undertook, one day, to climb an apple-tree after a bird's nest, and when he had got nearly up to it, a rotten limb, on which he had placed his foot, gave way, and he fell across the fence, and injured his back so much, that he was lame, and had to stay in the house and keep his bed many months, afterwards. I think he must have been very sorry he attempted to climb after birds' nests."

It may not readily occur to every teacher, that, in this simple act of incorporating words into sentences, varied, as it might be, from time to time, we might at once teach the elements of almost every branch of an English education; —not, however, by the hands of any ordinary monitor; for here, the actual personal direction of an ingenious teacher is indispensable.

1. It is an exercise in writing, as has been already repeatedly mentioned; nor are we quite sure that much time need be spent in any other writing lessons, than those which the exercises, already mentioned, and this, above the rest, would involve.

2. It is excellent, as a method of teaching spelling. For, to say nothing of requiring the pupils to spell the words, as a *spelling lesson*, the very act of writing, and incorporating them into their respective sentences, would almost certainly lead to their right orthography. The teacher, in looking over the exercise, would probably mark the words spelled incorrectly. Every scholar, however, in forming his sentences, should have free access to a dictionary, and be taught to use it. Such a method, in fact, is the most truly practical method of teaching spelling, with which we have ever been acquainted.

3. It may be made the basis of a reading exercise. One of the great difficulties, which teachers have to contend with, is the unfitness of the reading lessons, contained in our reading books, for juvenile apprehension. Children do not, as a general fact, understand what they read. To read well, we must understand what we read, and be inte-

rested in the subject. In requiring a pupil to read sentences, paragraphs, and stories, formed by himself, both these points would be gained. He would of course understand what he wrote himself, and could he be uninterested in it?

4. Can it be necessary to say, that one of the chief excellences of lessons of this sort is, that they lead the pupil to compose properly, ere he is aware of it? The exercise, in question, is a thousand times better, for teaching composition, than formal lessons for the express purpose.

5. The use of grammar is to accustom us to speak and write correctly and intelligibly. Now, if we can learn to write correctly, it will be a great aid to correct speaking. But can there be a doubt, that the exercise of which we are speaking, would lead inevitably to correct writing?

6. It might be made to involve much of geography. Suppose one of the words indicated was Gibraltar. Let it be required of the pupil to give a familiar geographical description of the place; for which purpose, he should be required to study it. It should also be required of him to present his thoughts in his own language, and not in the language of the books he studies.

7. What has been said of teaching geography, in this way, is equally applicable to biography, history, and chronology, and, in some respects, to arithmetic. The words Franklin, Mexico, Plymouth, &c., would involve these varied sciences.

8. The words *head* and *hand* might be made a sort of text or starting point, where, or around which, the pupil might be encouraged to cluster what he could learn of anatomy, physiology, and health; in doing which, as well as in the cases just mentioned, familiar oral lessons, from the teacher to the class, from time to time, would be of immense service, and should never be dispensed with.

9. But it can hardly be necessary to particularize, further. To the ingenious teacher, it will be obvious, that, so far as the elements of a science can be taught, what might with propriety be called the topic system, there is scarcely a single branch, not excepting religion itself, which this exercise may not be made to include. And, if rightly conducted, it may always involve and inculcate, in every lesson, writing, spelling, reading, composition, grammar, and logic.

Will it be said, by any teachers, that, by the prominence

we thus give to slate exercises and oral instruction, we exclude, or seem to exclude, books, almost entirely? Very far indeed from it. The exercises in question serve as an introduction to their profitable use, and to enhance their value. When used, they will be used carefully, as well as highly prized; nor will they be thrown aside, the instant the pupil gets outside of the door of the school-house. They will recall to his mind, in after-life, none but pleasant associations of ideas, and will not serve the purpose, whenever they come in sight, of small doses of nauseating medicines.

But the question will still recur,—and it is an important one, since it will not, in all probability, be expedient to abolish the old-fashioned exercises of our schools, at once, if ever,—how should these exercises be conducted? In what way shall the exercise of reading, for example, be managed, so as to render it most beneficial to the whole class? Shall each particular pupil, at each exercise, be required to read more or less, whatever may be the number of his class, and however small may be his proportion of the time? Or shall one, or a very small number, read, and the others make corrections? Or shall the teacher read, requiring the others to correct her?

There can be no doubt, that various methods of teaching reading may, under different circumstances, be adopted. Seldom, however, have we thought it best for a large class, consisting of fifteen, or twenty, or even twelve, scholars, or when we had but fifteen or twenty minutes to expend, to read through the class, two or three times, as the common custom is. On the contrary, we have found it better, and sometimes equally pleasant, for a few, only, to read the lesson, the rest observing *how* it was read, and, at the proper time, making their remarks, and offering their corrections. If A, B, C, and D, read the lesson, to-day, and the others make their remarks; E, F, G, and H, may be required to read, to-morrow, and the readers of to-day become critics, in turn.

Perhaps, however, there is not and cannot be a better exercise in reading, in Common Schools, than for the teacher to read before her pupils, and afterwards call upon them, severally, for their corrections. They should be required to correct her, in every point, as to loudness of voice, distinctness, emphasis, cadence, tone, and correct

pronunciation. Let them not only say wherein she seemed to them to fail, in any respect, but also, wherein an improvement might be made, in her manner of reading. We repeat it, we are quite sure, that in no reading exercise, in a very large school, can five, ten, or fifteen minutes be expended on a large class, to better purpose, than in the one we have just mentioned.

We have a great deal we should like to say, in regard to methods of teaching reading and spelling, as well as many other branches, but we have said enough, for the present. The teacher, who would not be benefitted by the hints already thrown out, on the subject, would hardly profit from further remarks; while, to the true inquirer, much has been said, that will be calculated to elicit thought, if not, as preadventure may happen, momentary opposition. Nothing, however, do we dread, in connection with this subject, so much, as a death-like stillness. The teacher's duties, as well as her principles and practice, should be made the subject of frequent animated discussion, and every reasonable effort should be made to render our Common Schools what they should be, and what they might have been. A.

As a further illustration of the foregoing article, and to show in what way the minds of young children might be both pleasantly and profitably exercised, the following "Lessons on Objects" are selected from an English book, entitled, "Model Lessons for Infant School Teachers," &c. It will be seen that the lessons are adapted to very young children; but an ingenious teacher will at once comprehend the plan, and she will then easily find objects more or less familiar, and adapt her lessons to the capacity of her scholars. The great end, which ought always to be kept in view, is, to give the children real, instead of verbal knowledge.

"Lesson III.—Wool.—What is this? Wool. Look, children, this is wool; where does wool come from? It comes off the sheep's back. What sort of thing is a sheep? An animal. What is wool, then? Part of an animal. Of what use is the wool to the sheep? To keep him warm. Can the sheep make its own wool? No. Who gave the little sheep this warm clothing? God. Yes, God gave the sheep this warm clothing, because it

cannot make any for itself. Now, pass this wool about; look at it, and feel it, and tell me what you can find out about it. It is soft. Repeat,—wool is soft. It is all hairs. Do you all see the hairs? Yes. Repeat, then,—wool is formed of hairs. How does it feel unlike the water? It is dry. Repeat,—wool is dry. What more? It is warm. Does it feel warm, when you touch it, like fire? No. What do you mean? It keeps us warm. Repeat,—wool keeps us warm. Yes, it keeps us warm, because it prevents the warmth of our bodies from passing away from us. Who can tell me what wool is used for? To make stockings, and flannel. What is that very thick flannel, you have on your beds? Blankets. Do you know any kind of clothes made of it? Yes, father's coat. And what have some persons on their floors, to keep their feet warm? Carpets. Carpets are made of wool. Now, repeat all you have said of wool,—wool comes off the *sheep's back*, the clothing which God gave him, to keep him *warm;* wool is *soft*, *dry*, and formed of *hairs;* it keeps us *warm;* it is made into *stockings*, *flannel*, *blankets*, and *carpets*."

"Lesson XI.—Writing Paper.—What is this? Paper. Where do we get paper from? Does it grow upon any plant? Does it come off any animal? Do we dig it out of the ground? How do we get it, then? It is made. Yes, it is made by man; but did man make it out of nothing? No. Who can make things out of nothing? God. Where did you learn that God made every thing? From the Bible. To whom, then, does every thing belong? To God. Who must give us every thing? God. Whom, then, should we thank for every thing we have? God. If man makes paper, he must have something to make it with. Do any of you know of what paper is made? Of rags. Yes; and the best paper is made of linen rags. Of what is linen made? You do not know. I will tell you; it is made from the fibrous stem of a very pretty little plant. Here is the picture of it; it is called flax. Repeat together,—paper is made of rags; the finest paper is made of linen rags; linen is made from the stem of a plant called flax. Now, children, look at the paper, and tell me something about it. It is white. This paper is white; but what is this? Blue. And this? Brown. What kind of paper is made white? Writing paper.

Try and find out why writing paper is made white? That we may see the writing upon it. Look at it and feel it. It is smooth. Put it between your thumb and finger. It is thin. Try again. It is light. Repeat together these qualities,—writing paper is smooth, thin, light. Now, hold it up against the light. We can see through it. Can you see through it as well as you do through glass? What is the difference? We can see every thing quite clearly through the glass; but through paper we only see the light. Try what you can do with paper. We can tear it. What besides? We can bend it, and fold it. Repeat together,—paper is easily torn; it can be bent and folded easily. See, I have put some into the fire; it burns; we call this inflammable. Why do we call paper inflammable? Because it burns easily. Tell me some other things that are inflammable. Wood and coal, &c. Of what use is this kind of paper? To write upon."

VALUABLE SCHOOL BOOKS,

PUBLISHED BY

GEORGE TILDEN, KEENE, N. H.

AND FOR SALE BY ALL THE BOOKSELLERS.

SEQUEL TO EASY LESSONS; a selection of Reading Lessons for Common Schools; designed to be used after Easy Lessons, American Popular Lessons, Boston Reading Lessons, &c. By Rev. LEVI W. LEONARD, author of the Literary and Scientific Class Book. Thirteenth edition.

[*From Rev. Z. S. Barstow, of Keene.*]

"It is such a book as was much needed, being adapted to the understanding of the young, and suited to convey, in an easy and interesting manner, interesting information, and to promote the love of literature."

NORTH AMERICAN SPELLING-BOOK, conformed to Worcester's Dictionary. By the author of the Sequel to Easy Lessons. Twenty-fifth edition.

[*From the North American Review, January*, 1837.]

"This little work is somewhat beyond the range of our accustomed studies. But we cannot deny ourselves the satisfaction of saying, that as far as we are able to form an idea of what a Spelling Book should be, this is precisely that thing."

COLBURN'S FIRST LESSONS.—Intellectual Arithmetic, upon the Inductive Method of Instruction. By WARREN COLBURN, A. M.

☞ Teachers and School Committees furnished with copies for examination, GRATIS.

LB1025 .L55
Modes of instruction in common scho
Gutman Library APD4678
3 2044 028 961 969